

(In him that was of late an Heretike)
As firme as faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well, no more:
Be not as extreme in submission, as in offence,
But let our plot go forward: Let our wiuies
Yet once againe (to make vs publike sport)
Appoint a meeting with this old fat-fellow,
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way then that they spoke of.
Page. How? to send him word they'll meete him in
the Parke at midnight? Fie, fie, he'll neuer come.

En. You say he has bin throwne in the Riuer: and
has bin greuously peaten, as an old o'man: me-thinkes
there should be terrors in him, that he should not come:
Me-thinkes his flesh is punish'd, hee shall haue no de-
fires.

Page. So thinke I too.

M. Ford. Deuise but how you'll vse him whe he comes,
And let vs two deuise to bring him thither.

Mist. Page. There is an old tale goes, that *Herne* the
Hunter (sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forrest)
Doth all the winter time, at still midnight
Walke round about an Oake, with great rag'd-hornes,
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And make milch-kine yeeld blood, and shakes a chaine
In a most hideous and dreadfull manner.
You haue heard of such a Spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed-Eld
Receiu'd, and did deliuer to our age
This tale of *Herne* the Hunter, for a truth.

Page. Why yet there want not many that do feare
In deepe of night to walke by this *Hernes* Oake:
But what of this?

Mist. Ford. Marry this is our deuise,
That *Falstaffe* at that Oake shall meete with vs.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come,
And in this shape, when you haue brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? What is your plot?

Mist. Pa. That likewise haue we thoght vpon: & thus:
Nan Page (my daughter) and my little sonne,
And three or foure more of their growth, wee'l dresse
Like *Vrchins*, *Ouphes*, and *Fairies*, greene and white,
With rounds of waxen Tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands; vpon a fodaine,
As *Falstaffe*, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a saw-pit rush at once
With some diffused song: Vpon their sight
We two, in great amazednesse will flye:
Then let them all encircle him about,
And Fairy-like to pinch the vnclane Knight;
And aske him why that houre of Fairy Reuell,
In their so sacred pathes, he dares to tread
In shapè prophane.

Ford. And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed *Fairies* pinch him, sound,
And burne him with their Tapers.

Mist. Page. The truth being knowne,
We'll all present our selues; dis-horne the spirit,
And mocke him home to Windsor.

Ford. The children must
Be practis'd well to this, or they'll neuer doe't.

Ena. I will teach the children their behauiours: and I
will be like a Jacke-an-Apes also, to burne the Knight
with my Taber.

Ford. That will be excellent,
Ile go buy them vizards.

Mist. Page. My *Nan* shall be the Queene of all the
Fairies, finely attired in a robe of white.

Page. That filke will I go buy, and in that time
Shall *M. Slender* steale my *Nan* away,
And marry her at *Eaton*: go, send to *Falstaffe* straight.

Ford. Nay, Ile to him againe in name of *Broome*,
Hee'll tell me all his purpose: sure hee'll come.

Mist. Page. Feare not you that: Go get vs properties
And tricking for our *Fayries*.

Enans. Let vs about it,
It is admirable pleasures, and ferry honest knaueries.

Mist. Page. Go *Mist. Ford*,
Send quickly to Sir *John*, to know his minde:

Ile to the Doctor, he hath my good will,
And none but he to marry with *Nan Page*:

That *Slender* (though well landed) is an Ideot:
And he, my husband best of all affects:

The Doctor is well monied, and his friends
Potent at Court: he, none but he shall haue her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to craucher.

Scena Quinta.

Enter *Hofst*, *Simple*, *Falstaffe*, *Bardolfe*, *Enans*,
Cairn, *Quickly*.

Hofst. What wouldst thou haue? (Boore) what? (chick
skin) speake, breathe, discusse: breese, short, quicke,
snap.

Simp. Marry Sir, I come to speake with Sir *John Fal-*
staffe from *M. Slender*.

Hofst. There's his Chamber, his House, his Castle,
his standing-bed and truckle-bed: 'tis painted about
with the story of the Prodigall, fresh and new: go, knock
and call: hee'll speake like an Anthropophaginian vnto
thee: Knocke I say.

Simp. There's an olde woman, a fat woman gone vp
into his chamber: Ile be so bold as stay Sir till she come
downe: I come to speake with her indeed.

Hofst. Ha? A fat woman? The Knight may be robb'd:
Ile call. Bully-Knight, Bully Sir *John*: speake from thy
Lungs Military: Art thou there? It is thine Hofst, thine
Ephesian calls.

Fal. How now, mine Hofst?

Hofst. Here's a Bohemian-Tartar taries the comming
downe of thy fat-woman: Let her descend (Bully) let
her descend: my Chambers are honourable: Fie, priua-
cy? Fie.

Fal. There was (mine Hofst) an old-fat-woman euen
now with me, but she's gone.

Simp. Pray you Sir, was't not the Wife-woman of
Brainford?

Fal. I marry was it (Mussel-shell) what would you
with her?

Simp. My Master (Sir) my master *Slender*, sent to her
seeing her go thorough the streets, to know (Sir) whe-
ther one *Nim* (Sir) that beguil'd him of a chaine, had the
chaine, or no.

Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

Simp. And what sayes she, I pray Sir?

Fal. Marry shee sayes, that the very same man that
beguil'd Master *Slender* of his Chaine, cozon'd him of it.

Simp. I would I could haue spoken with the Woman
her

her selfe, I had other things to haue spoken with her
too, from him.

Fal. What are they? let vs know.

Hofst. I: come: quicke.

Fal. I may not conceale them (Sir.)

Hofst. Conceale them, or thou di't.

Simp. Why sir, they were nothing but about *Mistris*
Anne Page, to know if it were my Masters fortune to
haue her, or no.

Fal. 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

Simp. What Sir?

Fal. To haue her, or no: goe; say the woman told
me so.

Simp. May I be bold to say so Sir?

Fal. I Sir: like who more bold.

Simp. I thanke your worship: I shall make my Master
glad with these tydings.

Hofst. Thou art clearkly: thou art clearkly (Sir *John*)
was there a wife woman with thee?

Fal. I that there was (mine Hofst) one that hath taught
me more wit, then euer I leard before in my life: and
I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my lear-
ning.

Bar. Out alas (Sir) cozonage: meere cozonage.

Hofst. Where be my horses? speake well of them var-
letto.

Bar. Run away with the cozoners: for so soone as
I came beyond *Eaton*, they threw me off, from behinde
one of them, in a slough of myre; and set spurres, and
away; like three *Germane*-diuels; three *Doctor Fan-*
stafes.

Hofst. They are gone but to meete the Duke (villaine)
doe not say they be fled: *Germanes* are honest men.

Enan. Where is mine Hofst?

Hofst. What is the matter Sir?

Enan. Haue a care of your entertainments: there is a
friend of mine come to Towne, tels mee there is three
Cozen-Iermans, that has cozend all the Hofst of *Readins*,
of *Maidenhead*; of *Cole-brooke*, of horses and money: I
tell you for good will (looke you) you are wise, and full
of gibes, and vlouting-stocks: and 'tis not conuenient
you should be cozoned. Fare you well.

Cai. Ver'is mine Hofst de *Lartiere*?

Hofst. Here (Master *Doctor*) in perplexitie, and doubt-
full delemma.

Cai. I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a-me, dat
you make grand preparation for a Duke de *Iamanie*: by
my trot: der is no Duke that the Court is know, so
come: I tell you for good will: adieu.

Hofst. Huy and cry, (villaine) goe: assist me Knight, I
am vndone: fly, run: huy, and cry (villaine) I am vn-
done.

Fal. I would all the world might be cozond, for I
haue beene cozond and beaten too: if it should come
to the care of the Court, how I haue beene transformed;
and how my transformation hath beene washd, and
cudgeld, they would melt mee out of my fat drop by
drop, and liquor Fishermens-boots with me: I warrant
they would whip me with their fine wits, till I were as
crest-falne as a dride-peare: I neuer prosper'd, since I
forwore my selfe at *Primero*: well, if my winde were
but long enough; I would repent: Now? Whence come
you?

Qui. From the two parties forsooth.

Fal. The Diuell take one partie, and his Dam the
other: and so they shall be both bestow'd; I haue suf-

fer'd more for their sakes; more then the villanous in-
constancy of mans disposition is able to beare.

Qui. And haue not they suffer'd? Yes, I warrant; spe-
cially one of them; *Mistris Ford* (good heart) is beaten
blacke and blew, that you cannot see a white spot about
her.

Fal. What tell'st thou mee of blacke, and blew? I
was beaten my selfe into all the colours of the Raine-
bow: and I was like to be apprehended for the Witch
of *Braine-ford*, but that my admirable dexteritie of wit,
my counterfeiting the action of an old woman deliuer'd
me, the knaue Constable had set me ith' Stocks, ith' com-
mon Stocks, for a Witch.

Qui. Sir: let me speake with you in your Chamber,
you shall heare how things goe, and (I warrant) to your
content: here is a Letter will say somewhat: (good-
hearts) what a-doe here is to bring you together? Sure,
one of you do's nor serue heauen well, that you are so
cross'd.

Fal. Come vp into my Chamber.

Exeunt.

Scena Sexta.

Enter *Fenton*, *Hofst*.

Hofst. Master *Fenton*, talke not to mee, my minde is
heauy: I will giue ouer all.

Fen. Yet heare me speake: assist me in my purpose,
And (as I am a gentleman) ile giue thee
A hundred pound in gold, more then your losse.

Hofst. I will heare you (Master *Fenton*) and I will (at
the least) keepe your counsell.

Fen. From time to time, I haue acquainted you
With the deare loue I beare to faire *Anne Page*,
Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection,
(So farre forth, as her selfe might be her chooser)
Euen to my wish; I haue a letter from her
Of such contents, as you will wonder at;
The mirth whereof, so larded with my matter,
That neither (singly) can be manifested
Without the shew of both: far *Falstaffe*
Hath a great Scene: the image of the iest
Ile show you here at large (harke good mine Hofst):
To night at *Hernes-Oke*, iust 'twixt twelue and one,
Must my sweet *Nan* present the *Faerie-Queene*:
The purpose why, is here: in which disguise
VWhile other Iests are something ranke on foote,
Her father hath commanded her to slip
Away with *Slender*, and with him, at *Eaton*

Immediately to Marry: She hath consented: Now Sir,
Her Mother, (euen strong against that match
And firme for Doctor *Cairn*) hath appointed
That he shall likewise shuffle her away,
While other sports are tasking of their mindes,
And at the *Deary*, where a Priest attends
Strait marry her: to this her Mothers plot
She seemingly obedient) likewise hath
Made promise to the Doctor: Now, thus it rests,
Her Father meanes she shall be all in white;
And in that habit, when *Slender* sees his time
To take her by the hand, and bid her goe,
She shall goe with him: her Mother hath intended
(The better to deuore her to the Doctor;
For they must all be mask'd, and vizarded)

That